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The Horrid Sin
OF
Man-Catching:

Explain'd

In a SERMON upon JER. 5. 25, 26.

Preach'd at *COLCHESTER*, *July* 10. 1681.

By EDMOND HICKERINGILL, Rector of the Rectory of *All-Saints* there.

Deliver me not over to the will of mine Enemies, for False Witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breath out Cruelty. Psal. 27. 12.
They laid to my Charge things that I knew not. Psal. 35. 11.
The Chief Priests and Scribes sought how they might kill him, for they feared the People: then entred Satan into Judas. Luke 22. 2, 3.
Now the Chief Priests and Elders, and all the Counsel sought False Witness against Jesus *to put him to Death; but found none: yea, though many False Witnesses came, yet found they none; At the last came two False Witnesses.* Matth. 26. 59, 60.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

I *Know very well that every Book-ſellers Stall groans under the burthen of* Sermons, Sermons;—*Sermons as common (and as commonly cryed about the Streets) as* Ballads; *Sermons before his Majeſty, before the Judges, before the Right Honourable, the Right Worſhipful,* &c. *In Court, in City, in the Univerſity, in the Country,* &c. *Sermons of* good *uſe, Sermons of* little or no *uſe, Sermons of* great *uſe, (eſpecially to thoſe reading Don's of the Pulpit, that tranſcribing other Men's Works, make a ſhift to read them, tho many times as much out of the Story, as hard to get in again when they are out, as having never been either in their Heads or Hearts;) Sermons of* Learned *Compoſure both for Matter and Style; and Sermons* given, *and Sermon's* ſold *(over and over again) and ſome Sermon's (perhaps) publiſhed out of meer Vanity and Itch to be ſeen in print.*

Which of theſe, or whether any of theſe *cauſed the Publication of this Country-Sermon, (neither contriv'd, devis'd nor intended for the Preſs, but) preach'd in my ordinary Courſe in my own Pariſh, I do not think my ſelf concerned to give thee any account; for they that like it not, may let it alone; yet the*

publiſhing thereof is chiefly intended for the uſe of them that have moſt need *of it, and who will (therefore)* like it *ſo much* the worſe.

Some Men are ſo crafty as in neglect of their Duty to God, to their King, the Kingdom, and their own Souls, they dare not preach againſt this Sin of Man-catching, or Trepanning Men by Sham-Evidence, Falſe Witneſſes, Sham-Plots, the Sin of the Text, (*I had almoſt ſaid*) *of the* Times: *in ſwearing and unſwearing, lying, ſlandering, and forſwearing, and ſo ſetting Snares to catch Men, Body and Goods, Life and Eſtate: whilſt the World is the worſe, but never the better for thoſe Preachers, thoſe* Chips in Broth, *whoſe God is their Bellies, and are only ſwayed by that Kitchin-Maxime,* It is good ſleeping in a whole Skin; *whilſt I chuſe to follow that* Plain-Dealer *and Martyr, Biſhop* Latimer, *who preſented the King for a New-Years Gift, with a Bible, with this Inſcription in Letters of Gold on the outſide thereof (perhaps for fear the King ſhould not much trouble himſelf with looking on the Inſide) Heb.* 13. 4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.

Hen. 8.

I know not what thanks he got for his New-Years Gift, but he prov'd a true Prophet in one of his Sermons, where he ſays, We Miniſters cannot ſay Væ Vobis, *but preſently we are called* coram Nobis: *We cannot reprove Sin in the Pulpit, but forthwith we may be reprov'd for it by the Bench. But (Bleſſed be God) we do not live (as* Latimer *once did) in Popiſh-Times, nor in Times where Popery has the greateſt Sway: Or if we ſhould, It is the greateſt Honour, as well as greateſt Piety, to follow* his Fate, *as well as* his Honeſty and Plain-dealing.

THE

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THE

Horrid Sin of *Man-Catching.*

Explain'd in a

SERMON

Upon JER. 5. 25, 26.

Your Iniquities have turned away theſe things, and your Sins have withholden good things from you. For among my People are found wicked Men, they lay wait as he that ſetteth Snares, they ſet a Trap, they catch Men.

IN which Words, I ſhall only take notice in General; 1. Of *God's heavy Judgment* upon *Iſrael*, *ver.* 25. 2. *Of the Cauſe* of that heavy Judgment, the crying Sin of *Man-Catching*, *ver.* 26.

But Firſt (to keep to the Method in the Text) Let us enquire,

1. Of what Nature was this heavy Judgment? *Queſt.* 1.

In Anſwer whereunto, we may conſider God's heavy Judgments, or heavy Hand. 1. *Poſitively:* 2. *Privatively.* *Anſw.*

1. By ſtretching forth his Hand of Wrath in ſtriking a People with either, 1. The *Sword of the Lord*; (for ſo is called, 1 Chron. 21. 12.

led, the Plague of Peſtilence.) Or 2*dly*, with War, Forreign or Civil War, though managed with the *Sword of Man*, yet God is ſaid to unſheath it, and call for it; and
Iſa. 34 5,6. therefore alſo Wars, bloody Wars are God's heavy Judgment upon a People, and therefore, called alſo —*The*
Ezek. 14. 17. *Sword of the Lord.*

2. God's heavy Hand or heavy Judgment upon a People may be conſidered *Privatively*, by *depriving them* of Mercies, Temporal Mercies, called *good things* in the Text, which *God* for their Sins had turned away and *withholden* from them.

What theſe *good things* were (which were *withholden*) may evidently be ſeen in the verſe before the *Text*; namely, God's heavy Judgment in *depriving them of the former and latter Rain in his ſeaſon, and depriving them of the appointed Weeks of the Harveſt*, Jer. 5. 24.

This great Drought did fore-run and threaten a *Famine*, (the worſt and heavieſt of God's Judgments,) the Sword of the Lord, and the Sword of Man (both of them) make quick diſpatch; but Famine is a lingring Death, and worſe
2 Kings 6. than Death, and the worſt of Death's. And it was ſad
25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. News for the King, when he heard, that his Subjects were glad to *preſerve their Lives by killing* one another; nay, the Mother killing and eating her own Child, and yet calling in vain to the King for help; that could not have an *Aſſes Head* for himſelf *under fourſcore pieces of Silver*, nor a *little Pigeon's Dung* (for the Deſſert or ſecond Courſe) *under five pieces more:* 2 Kings 6. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. No wonder that the *King rent his Cloaths, and wore Sack-cloth upon his Fleſh*, to mortify it. A great Drought, or God's withdrawing the Rain, beſpeaks a *Dearth*, as well as the Wrath of God upon a Land, when *the Duſt* (as God ſays to *Job*)
Job 38. 37, 38. *groweth into hardneſs, and the Clods cleave faſt together; when the Clouds are ſtayed, and the Bottles of Heaven* (as God there calls them) *are ſtopped*, and the People cannot get a Dram

Dram of these Bottles, tho it were to save their Lives.

In the *three and thirtieth* year of that wanton King *Hen. 8th* there was so great a *Drought*, that small Rivers were clean dryed up, and much Cattel died for want of Water and Food; and afterwards, *Hen.* 8. *Baker's Chro.* 198.

In the *five and thirtieth year* of Queen *Eliz.* was so great a Drought, that not only the Fields, but the Springs themselves were dryed up, and many Cattel every where dyed for want of *Waters*, which are the *good things* mentioned in the *Text*, the good things that God withdrew and withheld from the People for their Sins, their crying Sin.

And what (in the 2*d* place) was that crying Sin? *Quest.* 2.

The Text tells us, It was the Sin of ensnaring, lying in wait, and at catch, as *he that setteth Snares to catch* (not Wild-Beasts, but) *Men*, Honest Men, Innocent Men. *Answ.*

And that we may the better understand the horrid nature of this *Sin*, of *ensnaring Men*, or catching Men, in the Text; Let us consider:

1. *What and who* are these Men-Catchers? *Quest.* 1.
2. *Of what* these Men-Catchers make their Snares? 2.
3. *How and where* they lay their Snares? 3.
4. What is usually the *Effect and Issue* of this ensnaring and catching of Men? 4.

1. *What and who* are these *Men-catchers?* *Quest.* 1.

Some have thought by these Words (of the Text — *among my People are found wicked Men, that set Snares and catch Men*) are meant *Catch-Poles*, *Bum's*, *Spirits*, (so called from their *spiriting Men* by catching them and selling and delivering them to Thraldom and Bondage) *Villains to be sure.* *Answ.*

But these of the Text are *Villains* of a *far deeper dye*, *Scarlet-Rogues*, Rogues upon Record, upon the greatest, the truest and most antient Record, the Record of *Holy-Writ:*

Writ: These *Men-catchers* being called in the Text (by the Spirit of God that *miscall's none*, and never is guilty of any *misnomer*) wicked Men, or as the Original imports, Rogues in Grain.

Committing the greatest Villanies *under Colour of Truth*, and *Law*; that *Rob the Poor* (or Innocent) *because he is Poor*, (or Innocent) *and oppress the afflicted in the Gate*; (that is) in Courts of Judicature; which were then kept in the Gate-House, or Gate of the chief Cities in *Israel*.

Prov. 22. 22.

That commit the greatest Rapacities, Murders and Injustice, under the umbrage, pretence and colour of Law and Justice.

Mic. 2. 1. *Wo be to them* (saith the Prophet) *that devise* (or Plot) *Iniquity, and work evil upon their Beds; when the Morning is light they practise it, because it is in the power of their Hand.*

And if *Naboth* have a *good Vineyard*, no wonder, if he be *indicted of Treason* in slandering or *blaspheming God* and *the King*; And two *Sons of Belial* (procured by that Woman *Jezebel*) to swear to the Indictment, if *Jezebel* or *Ahab* long for the pleasant Vineyard.

1 King. 21. 10.

Mic. 2. 2, 3. *Wo be to such* (saith the Prophet) *that covet Fields and take them by violence; and Houses, and take them away; so they oppress a Man and his House, even a Man and his Heritage.*

This Sin of *oppressing Men*, or *catching Men in Snares* by false Witnesses, is that crying Sin, that brings God's heavy Judgments upon a Nation; that made him to *withhold the former and the latter Rain* in its Season; that always ruins a Kingdom, at least, it brings ruine at length upon the Oppressors, upon such *Jezebel's*, upon *Ahab's*; for so it follows in the Prophet *Micah*; *Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, against this Family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your Necks*; No, no, *Jezebel's* Neck was broke out of a Window presently after that Sin of Murder and Oppression *under colour of Law*; she did not long enjoy the Fruits of *her Subornation of Perjury*, but was thrown to the Dogs.

Mic. 2. 3.

For

For it is God's Truth, That *He that oppreſſeth the Poor to increaſe his Riches, and he that giveth to the Rich ſhall ſurely come to want.* For *Oppreſſion and Robbery* are ſo *near of kin,* that the Spirit of God puts them together, and makes them ſignify *the ſame thing* and the *ſame Men:* Only, the Oppreſſor robs *by* Law, the Robber robs *againſt* Law; the Oppreſſor robs in the Gate *under colour of Law,* the Robber robs on the Kings High-Way *in defiance of Law*; *both of them* always (or at leaſt moſt commonly) come to *an ill end.* Prov. 22. 16. Ezek. 22. 29.

But theſe latter are *little, Retail-Rogues* in reſpect of the former, that rob (ſafely they think, and) by *whole-ſale*, and brought God's heavy Judgment of *Drought* and Dearth upon the Nation of *Iſrael*, in the Text.

For a *High-way-Man* lyes at catch but for a *ſmall parcel* of Money, but theſe (like the Grave) ſwallow all; the good, the bad, Life, Liberty, Eſtate, Family and Poſterity, root and branch in one day. I mean, ſuch as are *Trepanners, or Countenancers of them*, Sham-Evidence, Falſe Witneſſes, whoſe Tongues can ſwear and unſwear, whoſe Tongues perhaps have cut the Throats of many a poor Innocent already, and ſtill want *more work, more work*; Men of no Honour, no Honeſty, no Religion, (except of that notorious and bloody Religion that is worſe than no Religion) you may have more Truth, more Kindneſs, more Fidelity, fairer quarter from Infidels (I know it) than from ſuch Bigotted-Catholicks, that think *it is Religion* (and pleaſing to God) *to cut Men's Throats.*

Which yet they do not, they dare not do always in the down-right *Godfrey-way* of murdering; that (has and may) prove dangerous; no, the Devil is crafty, and his Agents and Emiſſaries can improve in *Wit* as well as *Malice*; They ſhall do the Feat, lay their Snares, catch Men, (not, *in the Night and be hang'd*) but at Noon-day and *by Law*; not with *cruel hands*, but (a way worth two on't) with *venemous Tongues*, Tongues of a Serpent, *the Poyſon of Aſps is*

under their Lips, they kill ſure, no Law can hinder them; nay, they'll make the Law Pimp to them, and aſſiſt them in the Aſſaſſinate:

And that by falſe Oaths, falſe Tongues, ſwearing *pro* and *con*; as if thoſe that will ſwear you twenty Oaths in an hour for *God-have-Mercy*, will ſcruple at one Oath for Money, and to have all their other Oaths and Sins pardoned into the Bargain.

Atheiſm, *Blaſphemy* and *Bigottiſm* is now ſo epidemical and common, that therefore the *wary Hollanders* in their Courts of Judicature pump out the Truth, *not by Oath*, but *croſs* and ſudden *Interrogatories*, in which (by uſe) their Judges are as dextrous as happy.

But by *Falſe Oaths*, wicked Men can *do the Buſineſs*, do their *own Buſineſs*, get *Rewards* for catching innocent Men, and not always (though *ſometimes*) *the Gallows* alſo for their Pains, in ſetting *Snares to catch Men.*

Theſe are the Men that *can alſo do any Man's Buſineſs*, how innocent ſoever; of theſe the Prophet *David* had Experience, woful Experience, though he was *a Man* (for Integrity) *after God's own Heart:*

And the good Man was *at his Wits end almoſt*, and knew not well how to deal with theſe Men-catchers; and therefore puts the queſtion, as if he knew not how to reſolve it,

Pſ. 120. 3. Saying——*What ſhall be given unto thee? or what ſhall be done unto thee, thou falſe Tongue?*

As if he ſhould ſay; How ſhould *I ſtop* thy Mouth, thou falſe Tongue? anſwering in the next Verſe, *ſharp Arrows*

Pſ. 120. 4. *of the Mighty with Coals of Juniper:* as if he ſhould ſay;

Except the Mighty God with *Coals of Juniper* (the hotteſt Coals) *ſtop* the Mouth of theſe ſlanderous Tongues by his All-ſeeing Power (ſome unexpected Providence) vain is the help of Man.

Pſ. 120. 5. Therefore he adds——*Wo is me that I ſojourn in Meſech*---amongſt a Pack of Rogues, that will ſay and ſwear any thing,

thing; what help? He flys to God therefore and prays—and crys in this Diſtreſs—*Deliver my Soul, O Lord, from lying Lips, and a from deceitful Tongue.* Pſ. 120. 2.

And this Method he uſes againſt theſe Trepanners, and Men-catchers, in *Pſal.* 140. 141, 142. making *theſe three Pſalms* againſt theſe dangerous Fellows, falling to his Prayers, and beginning with the *Letany*—*Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil Man, preſerve me from the violent Man,* (or the Men of Violence) *which imagine Miſchief in their Heart, continually are they gathered together* (or conſpiring or plotting) *for War:* And what War? what Bloodſhed? not that of the Sword, but wicked Tongues, a ſharper Weapon, and kills as ſure; for he adds— Pſ. 140. 1. Pſ. 140. 2.

They have ſharpened their Tongues like a Serpent, Adder's Poyſon is under their Lips. Selah; or, mark that. Pſ. 140. 3.

And Verſe 5. *The Proud have hid a Snare for me, and Cords, they have ſpread a Net by the way-ſide; they have ſet Grins for me.* Selah. Theſe are the Snare-layers, that watch for Men's Words to catch at them, that watch for Men's halting, as they did for the Prophet *Jeremy*'s, when he heard *the defaming of many*; Fear *on every ſide, Report, ſay they, and we will report it*; with advantage no doubt, a Lye (like a Snow-Ball) ſeldom loſes any thing in the tumbling up and down. Pſ. 140. 5. Jer. 20. 10.

Thus, in anſwer to the firſt Query, I have given you *the Character* of a *Man-Catcher*; and though I have not skill enough to pourtray and limn *this Limb* of the Devil, that would *Harraſs* Men out of their Lives and Eſtates, yet by what I have ſaid, you cannot but look upon him as the *worſt of Villains.*

Q. 2. *Of what* do theſe Men catchers make their Snares? *Quæſt.* 2.

This Queſtion is not ſo eaſily anſwered; for the Devil and *his Emiſſaries tutor* them and find them ſtuff to work upon, and if one Snare *break*, they'll to work again, and will try if *another will hold.* *Anſw.*

They work with *Head and Heart*, Hand and Tongue and Pen, but always privily, in *private-Cabals* they plot their Work, fit their Engines, procure their Tools and Inſtruments and Engines; ſpare for no pains, no coſt, not daunted with any ill ſucceſs; like their Maſter, *running to and fro, ſeeking whom they may devour.*

Either by down-right Murder and *Ravilliacks*, taking Men's Lives away; that Snare catches Men to purpoſe. It was a *Pope* that ſaid on ſuch an occaſion, *a dead Dog bites not.*

But though theſe are *ſure Snares*, yet there is *danger* in ſetting them, and *jeopardy* to boot; dangerous to the *Men-Hunters*, and *Men-Catchers*; murder will out, one time or other.

Therefore the ſureſt way of catching Innocent Men, is *Jezebel's-way*, to make the *Law catch a Man*, (as Innocent *Naboth*) and kill him by the Teſtimony of ſome *Sons of Belial*; as aforeſaid.

Some think, That this Sin of Catching, Trapping, Enſnaring and Trepanning Men by Sham-Plots and Sham-Swearers and falſe Swearers, is a *New-Mode*, lately Invented, and new come over *from beyond Seas*, as our *other new-Modes* and Faſhions, and from *the ſame place* too:

But they are mightily miſtaken, that think this Sin of enſnaring Men at this rate is a new Sin, and never (or but lately) invented and thought of, before this Age, ſo fruitful and luxuriant in monſtrous Births and impious Productions.

For you ſee already that this Sin is older than my Text, an old Trick of the Devil, of *Jezebel*, of *Saul*, of *Ahab whom Jezebel his Wife ſtirred up*; no Sin more ſpoken of in Holy Scripture, no Sin had worſe Conſequence; for becauſe *of Swearing* (the Prophet means, Forſwearing, Perjury or Falſe-Swearing) *the Land mourneth*; as well as for what goes before, namely, *the Land is full of Adulterers, and therefore* alſo the Land mourneth: And ſo the Prophet *Hoſea* couples them together—*By Swearing, and Lying, and Killing*

Jer. 23. 10.

Hoſ. 4. 2.

Killing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Blood toucheth Blood.

The Original Word for *Blood* there, is in the *plural* number, to denote a great deal of Blood ſhed already by thoſe *Falſe-Swearers*, Affidavit-Men and Men-catchers, a *dangerous* as well as a *bloody* Crew.

Queſt. 3. How and where do they lay theſe Snares? *Queſt.* 3.

I anſwer, always in the Dark, *privily do they ſhoot, and fear not*, for their Works are Works of Darkneſs, their Engineer the Prince of Darkneſs, and the *Whore* in the *Revelations* (that has *Myſtery* writ in her Forehead) diſciplines them in *this Myſtery* of Iniquity, in *laying Snares to catch Men.* Anſw. Pſal. 11. 2. Pſal. 64. 5.

But always they ſet their Snares *by Night* (I mean) *by dark*, they hope no Body ſees them; but he *that is higher than the higheſt regardeth, and there are higher than they.* Pro. 1. 11. Eccleſ. 5. 8.

Holy *David* compares theſe lurking Catch-Poles, theſe Knights of the Poſt, (that wait in all Companies, and plye in all Aſſemblies) unto a *Lion lurking in his Den*, or in ſecret places, lying in wait privily and under ſome Covert (perhaps of the righteous Law) to catch Men, to catch their Prey. Pſ. 17. 12.

Where Men walk, where Men talk, *by the way-ſide*, ſays *David*, they inſinuate into all Companies, all Buſineſs, all Aſſemblies, where they can get admittance, they are never out of their way; catch at the Words of a Miniſter in the Pulpit, of a Judg upon the Bench, *laying Snares for him that reproveth in the Gate*, trepanning their very Comrades, their Friends and Familiars, like *Jeremy*'s Companions, *Jer.* 20. 10. *All my Familiars waited for my halting, ſaying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we ſhall prevail againſt him, and we ſhall take our Revenge on him.* Pſ. 140. 5.

But this they always do with all Privacy imaginable, and perhaps under an *Oath of Secrecy*, to pump the deeper, under Colour of Friendſhip, or under colour of ſome doubtful Word that will bear two Sences, and they ſhall always take

take it in the *worſt* Sence and the *wrong* Sence, and *inconſiſtent in Sence*, and incoherent with all former or ſubſequent Diſcourſe, or make Additions, *Villainous Additions* of their own, theſe are the Dark-Lanthorn-Men, that like *Faux*, walk with a Vizard on, the Vizard of Honeſty, of Religion, Friendſhip, or, perhaps of good Fellowſhip, laying thus
Pſ. 142. 3. *their Snares* ſecretly and in the Dark, *to catch Men*; Pſal. 142. 3. *In the way* (ſaith Holy *David*, of my Employ, my Trade, my Buſineſs) *wherein I walked, have they privily laid a Snare for me.*

Queſt. 4. Fourthly and Laſtly, let us conſider the *Iſſue and Effect* of theſe Catch-Poles, theſe Men-catchers, theſe *Judas-ſes*, theſe Trepanners; (For I know, you would gladly ſee their Exit and Departure.)

Anſw. They do not all (like *Judas* their Brother) hang themſelves, otherwiſe than as their own Facts bring them to the Gallows, and the Pit they have digged for others they fall into themſelves. Thus Holy *David* prayed againſt theſe Men, and no doubt but God Almighty heard his
Pſal. 140. 8, 9. Prayers—*Grant not, O Lord, the deſires of the Wicked, further not his wicked device, leſt they exalt themſelves.* Selah. *As for the Head of thoſe that compaſs me about, in the miſchief*
Pſal. 141. 10. *of their own Lips cover them. Let the Wicked fall into their own Nets, whilſt that I withal eſcape.*
Pſal. 142. 6, 7. *Deliver me from my Perſecutors, for they are ſtronger than I. Bring my Soul out of Priſon, that I may praiſe thy Name.* It ſeems they had got the Holy Man into Goal, *theſe Men-catchers had catch'd him*, and holed him, but could not hold him; he out-lived the Malice of theſe Men-catchers.

But yet it is as true, that God in his ſecret Wiſdom *does ſuffer* theſe Trepanners to proſper awhile in their Roguery; and ſeems to hide his Eyes whilſt his Beloved may be *ſore*
Pſal. 44. 19, 22, 23, 24. *ſmitten in the place of Dragons, and be covered with the ſhadow of Death, though for his ſake, they be killed all the day long, and are counted as Sheep for the Slaughter*, whilſt Almighty God

God *ſeems to ſleep*, and *caſt them off for ever*, *hiding his Face, and forgetting their Affliction and their Oppreſſion.*

Whilſt the Wicked ſay, Tuſh, God hath forgotten, he hideth his Face, he will never ſee it. Pſa. 10. 11.

And, I fear, that *Atheiſm and Irreligion* is the great cauſe of theſe Evils of Swearing, Forſwearing, Perjury and Blaſphemy amongſt us; together with that falſe Religion, that deems it lawful to *do evil that good may come thereof*; or, (however) can give a Pardon for the worſt of Enormities and Villanies; nay, can Saint a Villain, a *Clement*, a Murderer, a *Ravilliack* for Murder and King-killing.

Betwixt this Religion and no Religion there goes but a pair of Sheers, they are all of a Piece, and the ground-work of this Religion and no Religion, is *one and the ſame*, Atheiſm, it is to be feared; The ſubtile Grandees and Engineers that ſet the *bigotted* Wheels at work, ſaying in their Heart, There is no God; as that Pope *Leo* 10. that was ſuch a Fool as to diſcover his Atheiſm, in a jolly Fit, or to ſhew his Wit, and that he was above the foppiſh Ceremonies of that Superſtition, could not forbear his villanous Poetry, in another place recited,

—Hem! quantum reddit nobis hæc fabula Chriſti!

I am ſure this Temper or Diſtemper of Atheiſm drew a great deal of Blood, good and bad, from *Iſrael and Judah*, and made their Iniquity to be exceeding great, and filled *the Land full of Blood, and the City full of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion:* (for ſo the word *Perverſeneſs* is rendred, *wreſting of Judgment* in the Margent) And the reaſon of theſe Miſchiefs, is there given by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, at the latter end of the Verſe, to be Atheiſm—*For they ſay, The Lord hath forſaken the Earth, and the Lord ſeeth not.* Like thoſe in *Malachi*, that ſay, *Every one that doeth evil is good in the ſight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them*; or, *Where is the God of Judg-* Ezek. 9. 9. Mal. 2. 17.

Judgment? Where? No where ſure, ſaith the Atheiſt, or
1 King 18. 27. elſe he is like *Baal*, and buſy, either he is talking, or he is purſuing, or is in a Journey, or takes a Nap at preſent, and ſleepeth and muſt be awakened.

Poor Worms! Yet theſe are the Blades of our Times, and the Men of Valour, they dare ſtrut, like thoſe Gyants of old that bid Heaven Battel, and bid defiance to the God of Heaven, and blaſpheme him to his Face, and if they ever pray to him, 'tis only in Jeer, as when they pray to God to *damne them*, damn them:

All in good time; And yet theſe plumed Whiflers ſhall (like *Caligula*) ſeek a Cellar or Cave to hide their Heads in, when it does but Thunder, and their Hearts tremble and quake at every crack of Thunder:

Or, if Death do but ſtare them in the Face, through the Caſement of Sickneſs, old Age, Peſtilence, or in a Battel, then any Privy-hole or Hollow-Tree, is worth all the World to them, to hide their Heads in.

Ay, but like that *Egyptian*, King *Pharaoh*, let but their Fears be over, and their Luſts that rule them make them Atheiſts again, or willing to be Atheiſts again, and they ſtrut again, and cry, damn them again, and the little Peacocks ſhreame out and yawle amain, pluming themſelves:

Exod. 9. 34 Thus when *Pharaoh* ſaw that the *Rain, and the Hail, and the Thunders were ceaſed, he ſinned yet more, and hardened his Heart, he and his Servants.*

And I'lle aſſure you, theſe People think themſelves of the ſubtleſt Mould of Mankind, Wits refin'd from the common Dreggs of Opinions, imbib'd in Infancy and a Religious Education, and are in all Men's Opinions (as well as their own) *no ſmall Fools.* 'Tis a courſe Complement, I confeſs, to Men of their Pregnancy, but I learn'd it a long time ago in my Pſalter, *The Fool hath ſaid in his Heart, there*
Pſal. 14. 1. *is no God.*

He cannot ſay ſo in his Head, if there be any Buſineſs in it,

it, or any *Eyes to ſee* (the Earth, the Heavens, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, that keep their Courſes, whoſe Mover and Maker is God) but *he ſays ſo in his Heart*, (that is) he *wiſhes and prays* ſo in his Heart that there were no God.

God (there) in the Original is *Elohim*, not *Jehovah*. *Jehovah* ſignifies God as he is Eternal and Self-Exiſtent; but *Elohim* ſignifies God as he is a *Judg*, and ſo this Pſalmiſt uſes the Word in Pſal. 82. 6. *I have ſaid ye are Gods*; *Elohim*, Judges or Magiſtrates. Pſal. 82.6.

Thus the Fool could be content there was a *Jehovah*, a good and merciful God; but he cannot in his Heart (which accuſes and condemns him) deſire an *Elohim*, which is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things, even the ſecrets of the Heart, the ſecret Plottings, Conſpiracies, Perjuries, and black Villanies hatch'd in Hell and in *the dark*, and the moſt ſecret Adulteries, Sodomies, and Abominations not to be named, whilſt the Atheiſtical Committers of theſe Impieties, like thoſe Antients of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, that did their Idolatry in the dark, *every Man in the Chambers of his Imagery*; *for they ſay, The Lord ſeeth us not, the Lord hath forſaken the Earth.* Ezek. 8.12.

Then ſaid he unto me, Haſt thou ſeen this, O Son of Man? Is it a light thing to the Houſe of Judah, *that they commit the Abominations which they commit here?* Ezek. 8.17.

For they have filled the Land with Violence, and have returned to provoke me to Anger: and lo, they put the Branch to their Noſe.

Therefore will I alſo (ſaith God) *deal in Fury; mine Eye ſhall not ſpare, neither will I have Pity, and though they cry in mine Ears with a loud Voice, yet will I not hear them.*

Therefore *go dance*, you Atheiſts! and ye that curſe and damn, ſwear and forſwear, and kick up your heels at Heaven, go dance, like Murderers in a Goal (with your Shackles on) and think every day a play day till the Aſſizes come.

Isa. 28. 15, 18. *Go Rant*, and damn your ſelves, and ſay with your Brethren (in *Iſaiah*) *We have made a Covenant with Death, and with Hell are we at agreement.*

When the overflowing Scourge ſhall paſs through, it ſhall not come unto us; for we have made Lies our Refuge, and under falſehood have we hid our ſelves: But, your Covenant with Death ſhall be diſanulled, and your agreement with Hell ſhall not ſtand; when the overflowing Scourge ſhall paſs through, then ye ſhall be troden down by it.

One would think that no Man ſhould be ſo Purblind and Beetle-brow'd as to be an Atheiſt; who can chuſe but they muſt viſibly ſee God's Almighty hand ſtretched out, in Judgments, in Mercies, in overthrowing a mighty Oppreſſor, and perhaps by a *Jehu*, as very an Oppreſſor as he that he overthrew, and treading in the ſame arbitrary and tyrannical Oppreſſion, and in the very ſteps of his Predeceſſor, down tumbles he too; and this *divine Juſtice* is viſible to any Man of Obſervance or common-Underſtanding; the Heathen's called this Divine Vengeance—*Nemeſis*; and the Heathen Poet could not but obſerve it, when he ſaid—

Rarò antecedentem Sceleſtum deſeruit pœna pede claudo.

The Gouty Judg comes limping, makes no haſte;
But he'll ſtrike home and heavy at the laſt.

Iſa. 26. 11. *Lord*, (ſaith the Prophet) *when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee: but they ſhall ſee and be aſhamed for their Envy towards thy People, the Fire of thine Enemies ſhall devour them.*

But Words are loſt, and much more Holy Scripture Words are loſt on theſe ſtout Hectors, Atheiſts, falſe Witneſſes, Men-Catchers, Catch-Poles, and Sham-Evidence.

God bleſs us all from them, and grant we may never come into their Clutches, or within the reach and probability of their

their Oaths, *their Oaths, the Snares* wherewith they catch Men, many honeſt Men, uſeful Men; nay, *therefore* theſe Men-catchers lay their Snares and their Oathing-Gins to catch them; becauſe they are honeſt and uſeful, and ſtand juſt in the way to hinder their villanous Plots and Deſigns.

Well, go on, and ſwear and damn your ſelves to the Pit of Hell, and let Men perſuade you there's no ſuch thing as Hell; at worſt, but a kind of Purgatory, (a certain refining Crucible, only to take away your Droſs) and for a little Money, or killing two or three Hereticks, and that warm Hot-Houſe too may be avoided.

Make theſe Lyes your Refuge, and under theſe falſhoods hide your ſelves, there's little hopes to convert a *Judas*, they'll be hang'd firſt, or hang themſelves firſt, as he did, and damn themſelves firſt, it is to be feared.

Oh! but they'll ſay, It is a difficult thing to prove a Rogue perjur'd, and an Affidavit-Man, and an *Evidence* ſhall find Favour and Friends, 'tis hopeful; and if we ſwear (ſay they) to catch and trap a Man out of his Life and Eſtate, we are upon our Oaths, (*ſo are they every hour of the day but when they ſleep*, but no ſooner awake, but the firſt is a Prayer to God, Damn me) none can contradict us, the Jury is bound to believe us (*whether they will or no, and in ſpight of their Heart and Conſcience*) they muſt go according to their Evidence, (*Yes, yes, the Juries well know their Duty, well know you and your Evidence too*) none know to the contrary, is not an Oath an Oath?

Yes, Yes, an Oath is an Oath, and an honeſt Man's Oath is intended for the *deciſion of all Strife*; an Oath is not to make Strife, nor to draw Blood, nor to drill Men out of their Eſtates and Honours. And though none know to the contrary, but God Almighty; yet they go on and ſay, *Before Death and the day of Judgment, we'll repent and get a Pardon from our Ghoſtly Father*; nay, perhaps they have one before hand in their Pockets, *ſub Sigillo Piſcatoris, vel Sacerdotis.*

But your Ghoſtly Father, nor their Father---*Pa-Pa-Pater Patrum*, cannot deliver the falſe-Swearers and Men-catchers from the juſt Judgment and Diſcovery of the Father of Spirits, who proteſts he will be both *Judg* and *Jury* and *Witneſs* too againſt the falſe Swearers, Adulterers and Oppreſ-

Mal. 3. 5. ſors, *Mal.* 3. 5. *I will come near to you to Judgment, and I will be a ſwift Witneſs againſt the Sorcerers, and againſt the Adulterers, and againſt falſe Swearers, and againſt thoſe that oppreſs the Hireling in his Wages, the Widow and Fatherleſs, and that turn aſide the Stranger from his right, and fear not me, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts.*

What is Man, or Men, without the comfort of Society? what commerce or Felicity in the World without Society be ſecur'd? Away—*ye Peſts to all Society*, away—ye that are the Plague of Mankind and all commerce; who can be ſafe, if a ſevere courſe be not taken with ye *Judas-ſes*, that betray innocent Blood? Repent, repent, as your Brother *Judas* did, and ſay with him, *I have ſinned in betraying innocent Blood*, and reſtore the thirty pieces of Silver, *the price of Blood*, but make not the Kingdom an *Akeldama*, or Field of Blood.

I do not ſay that all Sins are crying Sins, and bring Judgments on a Kingdom and Nation, but this Sin of Injuſtice and Oppreſſion under colour of Law and Juſtice, by falſe Swearing and Sham-Evidence, catching and trapping Men, is certainly a *crying Sin*, and brought God's Judgments, his dreadful Judgments upon *Sodom*, the cry of whoſe Sins was ſo loud as to reach up to Heaven, *Gen.* 18. 20, 21.

And what were the Sins of *Sodom?* mark them well, as the Prophet *Ezekiel* numbers them to the Men of *Iſrael* to make them beware.

Ezek. 16. 48, 49, 50. *As I live ſaith the Lord God*, Sodom *thy Siſter hath not done, ſhe nor her Daughters, as thou haſt done, thou and thy Daughters. Behold, this was the Iniquity of thy Siſter* Sodom; *Pride, fullneſs of Bread, and abundance of Idleneſs was in her,*

and

and in her Daughters, neither did ſhe ſtrengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

So that even withdrawing of Juſtice, or oppreſſing the needy, is a crying Sin, and deſtroyed *Sodom*, and *Iſrael* too.

Therefore this Sin of falſe-Swearing, and Oppreſſion, or catching-Men by the Oaths of Catch-Poles and Sham-Evidence, has been an old Sin that ruin'd King *Ahab* and Queen *Jezebel*, almoſt ruin'd their Kingdom by a great Drought, it rained not for the ſpace of three years, ſo that there was a Famine and Mortality, they had ſcarce any Graſs or *Water to keep the reſt of the Beaſts alive.* 1 Kings 18. 5.

Indeed this Sin, though a common (too too common Sin) is ſeldom touch'd upon in Pulpits, though none more declaim'd againſt in Holy Writ; ſome Miniſters will not, and ſome cannot, and ſome dare not give *theſe Devils their due*, by a juſt and ſharp Reproof, I mean theſe falſe-Swearers, Catch-Poles, and Sham-Plotters, and Sham-Evidence, that lay their *Snares privily to catch Men.*

Let Papiſts call this a *Venial Sin*, we know 'tis *Mortal*, 'tis Fatal, 'tis a crying Sin.

How conſcientious was good *Samuel* to aſſoil himſelf of this Sin before all the People, before he left his Office of chief Magiſtrate; though not in the leaſt Guilty, 1 Sam. 12. 3. *Behold, here I am, witneſs againſt me before the Lord, and before his Anointed: Whoſe Ox have I taken? or whoſe Aſs have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppreſſed? or of whoſe hand have I received any Bribe to blind mine Eyes therewith? And I will reſtore it you.*

And they ſaid, Thou haſt not defrauded us, nor oppreſſed us, neither haſt thou taken ought of any Man's Hand.

And he ſaid unto them, The Lord is Witneſs againſt you, and his Anointed is Witneſs this day, that ye have not found ought in my hands. And they anſwered, he is Witneſs.

What care was here to get a *publick and general Acquittance* (that he had not exerciſed Arbitrary Government, Inju-

Injuſtice, Fraud or Oppreſſion) before he left his place: Is not this better than to be turned out for theſe Crimes? and become the *common odium* and object of the People's Hatred and juſt Indignation, beſides the ſtings and ſtigmatizings of a gauled and wounded Conſcience.

Spoken to the Mayor and Aldermen then preſent.

And therefore you that are Magiſtrates have a fair Example here, as well as fair warning, againſt all Injuſtice, Fraud, Oppreſſion and Wrong; or countenancing and abetting all unjuſt or Sham-Proſecutions, plotted by wicked Men (that make no Conſcience of a thouſand Oaths) and yet can enſnare and catch Men by virtue of one Oath, to the ruine of Life, Liberty, Eſtate and Poſterity.

Iſa. 1. 17. *Seek Judgment, relieve the Oppreſſed, judg the Fatherleſs, plead for the Widow.* What though theſe Catch-Poles or Pſal. 12 4. Catch-Men ſay, as their Brethren did, Pſal. 12.4. *With our Tongue will we prevail, our Lips are our own: Who is Lord over us?* And yet this lawleſs Wretch is deſcribed two Pſal. 10.7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Pſalms before to be one, *whoſe Mouth is full of curſing and deceit and fraud: under his Tongue is Miſchief and Vanity,* (*Heb.* Iniquity.)

He ſitteth in the lurking places of the Villages, in the ſecret places doth he murther the Innocent, his Eyes are privily ſet againſt the Poor.

He lyeth in wait ſecretly, as a Lion in his Den, he lyeth in wait to catch the Poor when he draweth him into his Net.

He croucheth and humbleth himſelf, that the Poor may fall by his ſtrong ones.

He hath ſaid in his Heart, God hath forgotten, he hideth his Face, he will never ſee it.

Ariſe, O Lord, O God, lift up thine hand, forget not the Humble. (*Heb.* humbled or afflicted.)

And God heard this Prayer; for *Pſal.* 12 5. we read—

Pſal. 12.5. *For the oppreſſion of the Poor, for the ſighing of the Needy, now will I ariſe* (*ſaith the Lord*) *I will ſet him in ſafety from him that puffeth at him,* (*Heb.* Him that would enſnare him.)

Though

Though I had not read it to you this Morning in the *ſecond Leſſon*, (ſo freſh in your Memories,) yet there are few of you but know, that there was a *Plot*, a horrid Plot and Conſpiracy by the Chief Prieſts and Scribes againſt our bleſſed Redeemer's Life, and *willing enough they were to kill him, but they feared the People.* Luk. 22.2.

Wherefore they reſolved he ſhould ſuffer by the Law of the Land, *for Treaſon*, in perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give Tribute to *Cæſar*, *&c.* Luk. 23.2.

But how ſhall they prove the Indictment?

Why that's the eaſieſt thing in the World; it is but *looking out* (and they are always at Hand) *ſome Knights of the Poſt*, ſome falſe Affidavit-Men, Catch-Poles, and falſe Evidence, and the Sham-Plot is perfected, the Indictment prov'd, and the buſineſs done.

Therefore all heads to work, eſpecially the Chief-Prieſts (they muſt be in at a dead lift) and Elders, *and all the Counſel ſought falſe Witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to Death.* Mat. 26.59

But found none: yea, though many falſe Witneſſes came, yet found they none. (That was hard, but) *at the laſt came two falſe Witneſſes.*

And theſe did the Buſineſs, for which they came, for which they were hired, and they were *Cæſar*'s Evidence, and ſwore for *Cæſar*, and ſwore the Matter home; And theſe Catchers carried the Cauſe, againſt the greateſt Innocence.

Mighty glad (no doubt) were the Chief Prieſts, and Elders and Counſel; and mightily careſſed and much made of were theſe two Sham-Evidences and falſe Witneſſes that ſwore home; eſpecially after the former falſe Witneſſes miſcarried in the attempt, as not having got their Leſſon ſufficiently by Heart. They had need be Men of Cunning and Ability that can ſwear thorow-ſtitch and cleaverly, mixing ſome Truth and probable Circumſtances amongſt many, and amongſt the main-Lie: There is art in daubing.

From

From a Lion, a Tyger, a Wolf or a Serpent, we may make ſome Defence and Proviſion, but this kind of Snake is *Anguis in Herbâ*, no Fore-ſight, no Caution, no Prudence, no Innocency can defend from the ſting of this forked venemous and murdering Tongue, except a Man abandon all Society with Mankind.

'Tis true, Men may keep theſe Snakes (and but perhaps neither) out of their Bed-Chambers, ſcarcely out of their Houſes, however not out of Publick Houſes, Churches, Courts of Judicature, Exchanges and Publick Aſſemblies; ſo that if they can but bring good proof for the Circumſtances, as that they were at ſuch a time in ſuch a Church, Aſſembly, Exchange, Publick Meeting, in Court, City or Country, *let them alone to witneſs* what they heard there.

Theſe (I ſay) are the great Plague, the *none-ſuch Peſts* of all Society, the *common-Nuſance:* no *former Age* (that I read of) can parallel ours for improvement of Vice and Miſchief: What Block-heads were the *French-Men's* Anceſtors in the *Art of Poyſoning*, in compariſon of the *preſent Skill* and Dexterity? What Block-heads were the *Iriſh*, the *native Iriſh* in all Arts and Myſteries imaginable, in *former Ages?* But *now* how ingenious (though ſome of them are but Bunglers ſtill, and enough to deſtroy a neat, well laid, and well contriv'd Plot in the Management, for want of Skill in a ſubtile Intrigue.) But time and *good Tutors may improve* them, if there be firſt a willing mind.

Tell not me of Conſcience and Religion, when Men make it a matter of Conſcience and Religion to catch Men by falſe Oaths, and ſo cut their Throats! *Will you call this* Religion, *and an acceptable day to the Lord?*

Iſa. 58. 5. 6. *Is not this the* Religion *that I have choſen? to looſe the bands of Wickedneſs, to undo the heavy Burden, and to let the Oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every Yoak?*

Thus have I entertained you an Hour, with my Meditations, not without ſome reluctancy (I profeſs); for I deſign'd

ſign'd not 'till this Morning to preach upon my former Text, having the laſt Lords Day left it abruptly for want of time: but I could not fix my Meditations nor Heart upon any other Text than this.

I am no *Enthuſiaſt*, to fancy that every conceit of mine, or warmth of Thought, is an impulſe of the Holy Ghoſt; nor yet ſuch a *Libertine*, as to neglect all obſervation of the ſecret and vehement Impulſes of God's Spirit, and his holy Communion with our Spirits. And I have often experimentally found (at other times) upon the like ſhort previous Premeditation, the *good ſucceſs thereof* upon the Auditory, hoping and praying that what in this Sermon wants of *mine or Man's* Abilities, may be *ſupplyed* by that *Holy Spirit*, that *beſt teacheth* us to profit. *To whom with the Father and Son be Glory for ever.* Amen.

FINIS.

D THE

THE POSTSCRIPT TO THE READERS.

AND now, *Gentle Readers*, if ever I had *need to beg* your Candour, or to make an Apology for publiſhing a crude Sermon, now is the time.

For as it is true, that I had not ſo much as ſhort Notes when I preach'd it, nor time to make them; ſo, as near as my Memory ſerves me, I have ſet down *verbatim* (at leaſt the Subſtance of) what I preach'd; writing immediately what I preach'd, whilſt freſh in my Memory, and ſo ſent it the next day by a ſpecial Meſſenger to the Preſs.

You'll ſay, perhaps, why? *What haſte?* If this had never been Printed, or Printed ſeven years hence, it is ſoon enough.

And all may be; For neither in the Preaching, nor Publiſhing, had I the leaſt Reflection to hit any particular Man alive.

But I know the Sin of *ſetting Snares to catch Men* is ſo common (*too too common* God knows) in theſe Days; ſuch Shamming and Trepanning, that ſcarce an honeſt Man in *England* of any Eminency, but has or may have cauſe to ſay with Holy *David* —*Every day they wreſt my Words,* Pſal. 56. 5.

all

all their Thoughts are againſt me for Evil.

If this Diſcourſe then be but *commoda ut accommoda*, as profitable as ſeaſonable, I have my end and only aim; purpoſely waving in this Sermon all vain Rhetorical Flouriſhes, idle or elaborate Quotations, much more that ſcenical gaping, or endeavour at Wit, Pun or Quibble, ſo much admir'd by the Humming-Tribe.

In which little Arts I have no Skill, and leſs Will; as thinking no Rhetorick nor Quotations comparable to that and thoſe in Holy Writ; leaving to Pulpit-Stagers, the little Hitts, Hintings and Glances at Wit, unbecoming the Gravity and Grandeur of a Divine, and better befitting the levity of a Stage, or a Barber's Shop, than the ſacred Pulpit.

And as I have no Malice againſt any Man alive; ſo I do not know nor believe that I have an Enemy in the World, but ſuch as are ſo, upon the ſame Score, and for the ſame Reaſon, with which St. *Paul* upbraids the *bewitched and fooliſh* Galatians, *Am I therefore become your Enemy becauſe I tell you the Truth?* Gal. 3. 1. Gal. 4. 16.

Some think our Diviſions and Diſtractions are ſo great, that they will not find *a ſhorter Period*, than the Wars and Miſeries of *Greece*: of the end whereof the *Oracle of Apollo* (being conſulted) replyed,—*They ſhould ſurceaſe when they ſhould double the Altar at Delos*; which was Cubique-form. Whereupon all Hands went to work in haſte to add another Altar to the old one, *of a like Cubique-Form to it*; but to little Purpoſe, for the *Miſeries abated not a whit.*

But *Plato* better expounded the *riddling God*, telling them, the Oracle meant, *They ſhould never have end*; for the doubling a Cube in *Solids*, is (as the Quadrature of a Circle in *Plano* amongſt Geometricians, or as the Philoſophers Stone, amongſt the vain-promiſing and vain-boaſting Chymiſts) never (alas!) *never to be found out.*

Yet I have other Thoughts, more Faith, and better Hope that our Diſtractions will find a happy Concluſion, and the Death of the Plots and Sham-Plots in good time be *fathom'd*, *ſounded* to the bottom, and diſcovered; yet, truly, I think, (as is ſaid of the Altar at *Delos*) a period and end of our Diſtractions is impoſſible, 'till all *Popiſh Altars*, *Popiſh Hopes*, and *Popiſh Claim* (by the *Pope and his Emiſſaries*) to theſe three Kingdoms of *England*, *Scotland* and *Ireland*, and the propagation of his Superſtition amongſt us be extirpate and rooted out, nay, Root and Branch: for there *always were* Plots, Popiſh Plots, in the Reigns of all our Kings, ever ſince the Pope's Supremacy and Uſurpations have been rejected; and whilſt there is a *fair proſpect and hopes* of Redemption of this *Golden-Fleece*, (though they be *but Glimpſes*) Popiſh Plots and Conſpiracies cannot poſſibly ceaſe, nor the *Engliſh*, *Scotiſh* and *Iriſh-Papiſts*, ceaſe their Aſſiſtance and Conſpiracies, except they apoſtatize from the Principles of Popery.

Do they not all follow the Fathers of the *Council of Trent*, into which not a Man was admitted to Vote, 'till he had taken this Oath—

Extra: de jurejurand. *Ego. N.*

Ego N. &c. *Papatum Romanæ Eccleſiæ & regulas Sanctorum Patrum adjutor ero ad defendendum & retinendum, ſalvo ordine meo, contra omnes Homines.* In Engliſh thus.

I N. &c. will be an Aſſiſtant, to defend and maintain the Papacy of the Church of *Rome*, and the Commands of the Holy-Fathers (*the Popes of Rome*) againſt all Men Living.

How *inconſiſtent* is this Oath with the Oath of Allegiance and Supremacy? How *impoſſible to reconcile* theſe two Oaths? How impoſſible for a Man to be *a right and true Papiſt*, and at the ſame time *a right and true Subject* to a Proteſtant Prince!

For

For which cauſe (no doubt it was) made Treaſon (by the Statutes 23 *Eliz. cap.* 1. and 3 *Jacob.* 4. In the Reigns of thoſe two wiſe Princes) not only to *perſuade the King's Subjects* (bred and educated in the Proteſtant Religion) *to apoſtatize* and turn Papiſts; but the *very Apoſtates* themſelves *are Traitors*—declared in theſe very Words.

—And if any Perſon ſhall after the end of this Seſsion of Parliament, by any means be willingly abſolved, or withdrawn, as aforeſaid, or willingly be reconciled, (to the Romiſh Religion before recited) or ſhall promiſe any Obedience to any ſuch pretended Authority, Prince, State or Potentate, as is aforeſaid; that then every ſuch Perſon, their Procurors and Counſellors thereunto, being thereof lawfully Convicted, ſhall be taken tryed and adjudged, and ſhall ſuffer and forfeit, as in Caſes of High-Treaſon. 23 Eliz. 1.

Then the ſaid Statute (*which ſee at large*) makes it *miſpriſion of Treaſon wittingly to aid or maintain ſuch an Apoſtate*, or conceal his Offence twenty days together, *without diſcovering it to a Juſtice of Peace*, or other High Officer: nay, he ſhall pay an hundred Marks, and be impriſoned a Year, that ſhall *willingly hear Maſs:* As it follows in the ſaid Statute.

And by the ſaid Statute *tertio Jacobi*; *The Apoſtate to the Romiſh Religion* ſhall be indicted, tryed and proceeded againſt as a Traitor, either at the *Aſſizes and Goal Delivery* of the County, for the time being; or before the Juſtices of the *Court of Kings-Bench.* 3 Jacob 4.

So careful have our Kings and Parliaments been to *brand* that *Julian*, that (being educated in an honeſt and true Religion built upon Holy Writ) ſhould be ſuch *a Fool*, or *Knave*, or *Atheiſt* (for *one of the three*, or *all of the three*, ſuch an

an Apoſtate muſt be) to change ſuch a Religion, for a Superſtition forged and invented by *Prelatical Pride and Rapacity.*

For the *maintenance whereof*, all their pious Frauds and Cheats, all their lying Miracles, Indulgencies, Purgatories, Limbus's, Croſſes, Images, *Agnus Dei's*, Holy Water, Maſſes, Canonizations, Prayers to Saints, baptizing of Bells, Excommunications, Fulminations, Inquiſitions, burning of Hereticks, Maſſacres, Fopperies, Plots and Sham-Plots are calculated, deſign'd and contriv'd.

I do not think that *every ſilly Papiſt* knows theſe things; for they (*poor Puppets!*) dance, creep to the Croſs, cringe, bow, drop Beads, croſs themſelves, ſprinkle themſelves with Holy Water, mumble their *Ave's*, and *ſhow tricks as the Maſters of the Puppit Play*, with Wiers (*within the Curtain*) actuate them; and make them *friſk* ſo ridiculouſly, *curvet* and ſhew ſuch *Gambolls* in Religion, eſpecially at *Proceſſions* (which I have ſeen in *Portugal*) that the ſobereſt Countenance cannot forbear a Smile, mixt with Pity.

But there's never a *Jeſuit* amongſt them, *Pope*, nor *Cardinal*, but knows that I here write *God's Truth:* And cannot forbear *laughing among themſelves* at theſe Frauds; only, they ſanctify *theſe Cheats* with a *mollifying* Epithete, calling them——*Pious Frauds.*

I know, 'tis hard, very hard, for even a rational Man to emancipate himſelf and his Reaſon out of the Hands and Tyranny of Superſtitions, ſuck'd in with our Mother's Milk, and imbib'd by Education. And therefore, *I rather pity than blame* a ſilly Papiſt, Man or Woman, brought up in ſuch Superſtitions: Which are as ridiculous as that of the *Indians* of the Iſland of St. *Thomas*, that fight it out to Death to this *day*, to decide which is *the right Elephant's Tooth* that fell from Heaven; whilſt the wiſe laugh or pity them, judging (aright) that both the *pretendedly-Divine*

and

and Heavenly Fangs came from the *Jaw-bone of the Beaſt.*

I therefore have compaſſion for theſe Bigots, *but none* for a Proteſtant, (that in defiance of Truth) ſhall apoſtatize therefrom, and run to *theſe thick Skull'd Vanities*; for which groſs *Perverſion* (not Converſion) the *Apoſtate* cannot ſo much as pretend *the deluſion of Education*; but quite contrary; (I ſay) *ſuch a Julian Apoſtate*, muſt either be an *Atheiſt*, and ſo, of *no* Religion; or ſome ſilly fooliſh Bigot that underſtands not the Principles *of any* Religion; or elſe has *conceiv'd* ſome monſtrous and *bloody* Stratagem and *Plot*, impoſſible to be *brought forth*, but by the *ſole Midwifery* of ſuch *bloody Hands and Bloody Religion*; no other Religion can poſſibly do the Feat. In ſuch caſe, I confeſs, there *is a neceſſity for ſuch an Apoſtate* to defy and forſake Proteſtant Principles, and the Proteſtant Religion.

For did ever any wiſe or honeſt Man *eſpouſe and wed* a Religion (to which he was not *pre-contracted*, and in Infancy drawn in and *cajol'd*) 'till *acquaintance firſt had* with that Religion he *weds?*

And do not all the learned and authentick Romiſh Doctors aſſert, and hold publickly in their Printed Writings and Books, that——*Papa poteſt diſpenſare contra jus Naturale*; The Pope can diſpenſe with the Laws of Nature, *(that's pretty well to begin with) contra Canones Apoſtolorum*; he can diſpenſe with the Rules of the Apoſtles: And, *contra formam verborum in Baptiſmo*, with the Form of the words in Baptiſm; *(How they improve! but let them go on.)* Others ſay, The Pope can diſpenſe *contra Jus Divinum*, *contra novum Teſtamentum*; others, *de omnibus præceptis veteris & novi Teſtamenti, contrà Epiſtolas Pauli*, &c. too many to enumerate. Some of them aſſert, That the Pope can diſpenſe with Divine-Right, and can diſpenſe with and againſt the New-Teſtament; others, with the Epiſtles of St. *Paul*; others, that the Pope can diſpenſe with the Precepts both of the Old and New Teſtament.

De tranſlatione & obedientiâ. 15. q. 6. *Authoritatem. In gloſſâ. Diſtinct.* 82. Præſbyter. *Felin. de conſtit.* cap. *Statuta* canon. *Colum* 6. q. 1. *Quicunq; In gloſſâ. Panormitan. Extra. de divortiis. Sum. Angel in dictione* Pap.

Poſſeſſ

Possest with these *deviliſh* Principles, therefore have their famous Doctors reviled and blaſphemed the *Holy Word of God.*

Pigghius Hierarch. *l.* 3. *cap* 3. *fol.* 103. Which *Albertus Pigghius* calls (*Naſus cereus, qui ſe horſum, illorſum, & in quamcunq; volueris partem, trahi, retrahi, fingiq; facilè permittit*) a Noſe of Wax, that eaſily ſuffers it ſelf to be drawn backward and forward, this way and that way, and any way; and in his third Controverſy concerning the Church, (he ſaith) *ſunt enim Scripturæ muti Judices*, The Scriptures are dumb Judges.

Pigghius Contro. 3. *de Eccleſiâ.*

Flaccus Illiricus *in Normâ Concil.* Did not *Ludovicus*, a *Canon* of the Church of *Lateran*, in the late *Conventicle* (or Council of *Trent*) without Reproof, in an Oration, aſſert, that *Scriptura eſt quaſi mortuum Atramentum*, The Scripture is dead Ink.

Johan. Sleidanus. *lib.* 23. And his Blaſphemy confirm'd by the Biſhop of *Poytiers* in the ſame Convent, ſaying, *Scriptura eſt res inanimis & muta, ſicut etiam ſunt reliquæ Leges Politicæ*; The Scripture is a dead and dumb thing, as all other Politick Laws.

No wonder therefore, that Cardinal *Hoſius*, the Pope's *Legate*, and Preſident of the ſaid Council of *Trent*, anſwered with as much *Impiety* as *Scurrility* to that Objection (namely that King *David*, being no Biſhop, yet had written the Book of *Pſalms*) anſwered—*Quid ni ſcriberet? Scribimus indocti doctique Poemata paſſim*; Why ſhould he not write? (quoting a Verſe out of *Horace*:)

Hoſius *l.* 2. *contra* Johan. Brentium.

The learned Poets, Songs indite;
Th'unlearned too, do Ballads write.

No wonder alſo neither, that St. *Paul* cannot paſs by them without a Jeer and Scoff: *Auguſtinum vetuſtas ſua tuetur*; *qui ſi reviviſceret cum Paulo, certe ille contemptus eſſet Rhetorculus, aut Grammaticulus*; *Paulus verò vel inſanire vel Hæreticus videretur.* *Auguſtine* is ſafe now becauſe of his Antiquity: But if he and *Paul* were alive again, he would be

Ludovicus vives *in lib.* 13, *de* Civitate Dei. *c.* 24.

be contemptible as a pittiful Rhetorician, and poor Grammarian; But *Paul* would be accounted a mad Man or an Heretick.

Whereas they hold that the Pope is *alter Deus in Terrâ*; God upon Earth: and others ſay, *Chriſtus in Cœlo præſidet, Papa in Terris reſidet*, Chriſt is Prince in Heaven, the Pope on Earth: Nay their Hebrew Gloſs, upon Deut. 17. 11. ſays, *Si dixerint tibi quod dextra ſit ſiniſtra, aut quod ſiniſtra ſit dextra, talis ſententia tenenda eſt*; if they (*the Pope and his Emiſſaries*) tell thee that thy right Hand is thy left Hand, or thy left Hand is thy right Hand, yet you ought to believe them, and be of that Opinion. Nicol. Lyra. *in* Deutero. *cap.* 17.

(But is it not as ſafe to ſay ——*I Believe in God?*)

Another ſays, *Sit ergo Domina noſtra Roma Baculus in Aquâ fractus, abſit tamen ut crederem quod viderim.*

Let our Miſtriſs *Rome* be a Stick that in the Water ſeems crooked, yet God forbid, that I ſhould believe my own Eyes.

No Man therefore (I ſay) can be a Papiſt, but he whoſe Eyes are *blinded by Education*; or, he who puts *his own Eyes out by Atheiſm:* For their own Books diſcover them palpably. To Inſtance but in one Paſſage more, mentioned in the Life of *Pope Clement.* 5. *Hic fuit publicus Fornicator. Ab eo tempore defecit omnis Diſciplina, & Religio in Cardinalibus, & tres Radices vitiorum, Superbia, Avaritia, Luxuria, validiſſimè dominantur.* Paul. Urſper. Gen. *in* Clemen. 5. Pap.

He (*Pope Clement*) was an arrand Whore-Maſter, publick and common; And from that time forth, all kind of Diſcipline and Religion failed amongſt the Cardinals; eſpecially three roots of Vices flouriſhed amongſt them, *Pride*, *Covetouſneſs* and *Lechery.*

Thus we ſee the Succeſſors of St. *Peter* can deny their Lord and Maſter, as ſtoutly as ever did St. *Peter* himſelf; but *he* with Repentance, theſe without repenting.

And how Men of theſe Principles *can be true to God or Man*, to any Proteſtant Prince or Proteſtant Neighbour, let the World judg; except they defy the Pope and the Devil, and all their Works of Popiſh and Helliſh Darkneſs, Plots and Deſigns. And I think I am not at all herein ſtrait-lac'd in my Charity, though I muſt expect *never the fairer quarter* from them for this Declaration.

But where is our true *Chriſtian*, true *Proteſtant* and true *Engliſh Courage* now become? Who, (but he that's *unfit to live*) would *fear to die in and for* ſo juſt a Cauſe?

Better a thouſand times (*if poſſible*) to die a *true Proteſtant*, and a *true Engliſh Man*, *by the Sham-Plots*, Falſe Witneſſes, and Popiſh Machinations; than willingly to *enſlave a Man's ſelf*, and Poſterity, Soul, Body, Honour, Honeſty, Religion and Eſtate, *to Arbitrary and Popiſh Sway*; I put *them together*, for (like *Hippocrates-Twins*) they are *born and live and die* together.

Does not Pope *Boniface* himſelf, with as little Modeſty as Truth, aſſert *his Univerſal Power over all Nations*, as well in Temporals as Spirituals, from that Scripture, Luk. 22. 38. *Behold, here are two Swords:* no jot to his Purpoſe, nor the *leaſt colour* more than the *bare ſound* of the Words; (*two Swords*;) which were no *Allegorical* nor Metaphorical, (but plain *travailing*) *Swords* of Ammunition-*Hilt and Blade.*

Luk. 22. 38.

And yet *this Uſurper* (though he can ſhow no Warrant, no Commiſſion nor Authority for his Claim, from Chriſt or Holy Scripture; yet, *like another late Uſurper*) he can *lay his Hand upon the Hilt* of his two Swords (*Spiritual and Temporal*) and cry, *This is my Commiſſion.*

For if his *Temporal* Sword (which is *no ſmall one*) be *too ſhort*; then he unſheaths his *Spiritual Sword*, and with *Fulminations*, *Excommunications*, Curſes and *Anathema's*, with Bell, Book and Candle, he huffs and ſwaggers; roars, rants, hectors and bluſters all Mankind, that *either fear* his

his vain *Thunderings*, or come *within the dint* of his Thunderbolts.

To keep up therefore this usurped Power, or to regain it, where lost, *there is*, and ever *will be* Popish Plots, when and where there are *any blooming hopes* to accomplish them in any Protestant Kingdom whatsoever.

They are not now, (though they have been) much troubled with these Popish Plots in *Sweden* and *Denmark*; wherefore? I'le tell you;

For *two Reasons*; *One is*, that the Laws against Papists are so fully put in Execution, *without connivance*; that I have rid a hundred Miles together in those Countries, and could not (upon Inquiry) hear of one known and profess'd Papist.

2. *Another Reason is*, (and they have found it, *by Experience*, a most *incomparable* Remedy) They *gueld* all the Popish Priests they catch in their Kingdoms and Dominions.

They *used to hang them* formerly, but that would not do; for the hopes of being Canoniz'd and Sainted (as Martyrs) drill'd some silly Priests thither; 'till a *converted Nun* (I know not from *what Experience*) persuaded Authority, to *gueld all the Popish Priests* they took.

They took her Advice, and it proves a wonderful Cure and *Remedy against propagation* of Popery in these Kingdoms.

I say therefore, 'tis senceless to doubt *the being of a Popish Plot*, that *never ceas'd* (since the Reign of *Hen.* 8.) *in England*; but now by *Coleman's Letters* it infallibly appears, that they never had *such blessed hopes* of converting these three Kingdoms, since the *Bone-fires* in *Smithfield* in Queen *Mary's Days*, as *now*, *now* at *this* time, *now that*—

And *the more impudently* they deny so clear a Truth, the more cause we have to *abominate the Villany* of that Religi-

And how Men of theſe Principles *can be true to God or Man*, to any Proteſtant Prince or Proteſtant Neighbour, let the World judg; except they defy the Pope and the Devil, and all their Works of Popiſh and Helliſh Darkneſs, Plots and Deſigns. And I think I am not at all herein ſtrait-lac'd in my Charity, though I muſt expect *never the fairer quarter* from them for this Declaration.

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And *the more impudently* they deny ſo clear a Truth, the more cauſe we have to *abominate the Villany* of that Religi-

on, that hardens Men in *Lies or Equivocations even to Death*; And the more they deny it, after such apparent and manifold Conviction, the more suspicious and dangerous it is, by the combined endeavour to conceal it, and to turn the Edge thereof upon the Protestants.

2 Kings 6. 18. Thus the Prophet did first *blindfold the Syrians*, and then how *easily* did he lead them into the *Enemies Camp*.

And indeed no Man can deny but 'tis politickly and craftily done, to endeavour to *put out the Eyes of those Men*, that are most quick-sighted to *discern their dark* mysterious and hellish Intrigues: Or, if they could but be *Godfrey-diz'd*, *strangl'd*, *hang'd* or *stab'd*, the Business would be done as effectually, and to all Intents and Purposes.

Especially, if the Sham-Evidences would but be improv'd and manag'd, with some *Lawyer's Hackney-Tongue*, whose Conscience is so often sold *pro* and *con*, right or wrong, for *Plantiff* or *Defendant* (who *bids most*, and who *comes first*) prostituted and set to sale, (when Merchandize is indifferently and equally made of Truth and Falshood) the Snare of *catching Men would be the stronger*, and the Feat more currant. But that honest *English* Juries do know that a *Hackney-Tongue is no Slander*, and they'll believe them no further than they list; They have heard them so often *bawle*, *babble and bluster*, so loud and clamorous for Plantiff *one day*, for Defendant *another*, that *no wise Man heeds them*; but knows that *Words* are *but Wind*, *Windy Words* (from *Hackney-Tongues*) as *empty and variable as the Wind*; but that it costs more to *buy such Winds*, than it does the *becalmed Mariners* in the *Baltick-Sea*, when they (as I have sometimes known them) *buy a Wind of a Lapland-Witch*.

But ('tis observable) that *this Hackney Wind*, as well as *the other*, is usually *fatal to all that buy* them, *ending* in a *Wreck*, at least, *a repented Bluster and Storm*.

Whilst

Whilst these *Merchants of Truth and Falshood*; Merchants of Law, and sometimes of very *little or no Law*, (but with) the same *Hackney* Tongues, vilify and disgrace all that stand in their way, without respect to *their own Modesty* (I thank you, some of them *have none!*) without respect to Ingenuity, *common Civility*, or good *Manners*, without respect to any Man's *Worth or Quality* (except they expect *a Fee from them*; for that *alone opens and shuts the Breath-seller's Mouth*) they cannot *open*, but *Dirt flys out to bespatter*, as if they had got a *Priviledg* or Patent to be the *Common-Shoars*, and *common Filth*, common Slanderers, *under the colour* of a Fee, and *under the Protection* of a *Motley* or *Button-Gown*.

Nay, (I know it, and will maintain it for a great Truth) that a Gentleman's Credit and Estate, Life and Honour, are in less Danger and Hazard in the Field amongst ten thousand Enemies, than amongst these *sneaking Split-Causes*, these Snappers, Ensnarers, and *Catchers of Men*.

For they can make the righteous Law execute their Malice and Spleen (by *wresting*, *wrong setting* and *turning its Edge*) so that no Innocence, Honesty, Honour, or Ingenuity can prove a *sufficient Safeguard*.

The *wary Hollanders* therefore (though the greatest and wisest encouragers of Trade) *of all Trades and Mysteries of Iniquity*, suffer not the *Merchandize of these Hucksters of Law*, in any of their Territories.

They suffer neither *Bar-Gowns nor Button-Gowns* amongst them; They suffer no *Tinkerly Pleadings of mending one hole, and making two*; They suffer no Man's Cause to perish, by the Error or Folly, Knavery or Inadvertency of any Scribe or Attorney, by a word *mis-placed*, *mis-recited* or *mis-pleaded*; but every Man knows an end of his Cause the *same day* he commences it, and pleads *his own Cause* before the *Lords*, (who seek not to *trap and catch* at their Ignorance) And they must be *very ignorant indeed*, if they make more *bungling work*, or can defeat their own Cause, disguize

guize or disgrace Truth, so readily as these *split-Causes* and *spoil-Causes*.

Notwithstanding all this, *I would not* be construed to reflect in the least upon those *honest* and *learned* Gentlemen of the *Long-Robe*, of which sort are very *many*, that have more Integrity and Honour, than to *abuse their learned* Skill by *entrapping*, *ensnaring* and catching Men, with *Law-tricks*, and *Sham-tricks*, turning Darkness to Light, and Light to Darkness, and turning *Pleading to Railing*, Lying and Slandering; now so much the Mode at Bar: a Shame it should be suffered!

'Tis these alone (as the World goes) that can defend us from the *catching Snares* laid by the former, to catch *a Man and his Cause*, a Man and his Heritage.

'Tis these alone (with the Authority, Justice and Wisdom of the Reverend Judges) that can deliver Men *out of the Snares* that are *laid* for them, by *those prostituted Hirelings*.

But *none of the Snares* that are laid to *catch Men*, are comparable to the *Subtilty and Cruelty of the Romish Priests*; for the *speediest* Execution of a Sham-Plot, is an *Absolution from a Jesuit*; or a *Bull of Indulgence* or *Jubilee* from the *Pope*, like that of *Pardon* to the *late Irish* Rebels and *Cut-Throats*.

So that the most *Cheveril-Charity* can scarcely have other Opinion of these *Romish* Emissaries, than St. *Hierome* had of the Clergy of his time, (who were so generally *debauch'd* and *mischievous*, that the good Father cryed out) *non puto multos inter Sacerdotes salvos fieri*; I cannot imagine (*saith he*) how it is possible that many Clergy-Men can go to Heaven!

So say I *of these Romish Priests*, if they stick to the Principles of their bloody Religion, *I cannot imagine how they can possibly be saved*.

For

For does not the *Inquisition* come out of *their holy Arcenal?* Are not all the *bloody Popish Plots and Sham-Plots*, contrived and managed *by them?* Did not *they invent* and forge in *England*, the Writ *de Hæretico comburendo*, to condemn Hereticks (namely, *all that oppose their Pride and Covetousness*) to Fire and Faggot?

But how? not by setting Fire to the Faggot *themselves*, or turning Hang-men; no, *those holy Men* will not *dip their Sacred Hands in Blood*: (Oh the Hypocrisy of such Devotion!) No, no, they knew a way worth two on't; they made tht poor *enslaved Bigotted* Magistrate do *that Drudgery*.

And before the Statute of Queen *Elizabeth*, (that awards the Writ of *Excommunicato capiendo*, and confines it to about *ten sort* of Offenders *only*) some think the same Popish Engineers in Popish Times were the first Inventers and Forgers *of that Writ also:* if they were, they were as *unmannerly as unmerciful*, to invent a Discipline *that God never made*; and that which our Blessed Saviour, the Holy Apostles, and Primitive Church, never knew; and then when they had anathematiz'd and *curst a Man to the Devil*, and the Devil *did not* or would not *take him*, then to make the *Sheriff and the Jaylor to take the Devil's Leavings*, and when *Hell would not* or did not, then the *Goal should:* The *Spanish Inquisition*, and *bloody Bishop Bonner* Bishop of *London*, made great use of *this Engine*. 5 Eliz 23.

The former Writ, *de Hæretico comburendo*, has found its *just Doom and Catastrophe*; but that of *Excommunicato capiendo shall stand* in force (when it is awarded according to the Statute) as long as——*When?* as *long as the King* and Parliament *shall please*.

But if I thought that all our Mischiefs come from *Rome* and *Popish Priests*, I should think (as some have done) that there was *more cause* (than *only the bare Error* of the Press) that in the Popish New Testament in *Latin* (Printed at *Cologn*)

Cologn) in 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. ſtands Printed (inſtead of) *neque Scortatores* (theſe words) *neque Sacerdotes regnum Dei poſſidebunt.*

No wonder therefore, that Pope *Adrian* 6. commanded *Cheregatus* his Legate *de latere*, to declare in a *Diet* of the Empire (aſſembled and held at *Norimberg*) in *Germany*—

Johan. Sleidan. *l.* 4. *Anno.* 1523. *A Sacerdotibus Iniquitatem Populi dimanare; multis nunc annis graviter multiſque modis peccatum eſſe Romæ: & inde à Pontificio culmine malum hoc, atque luem ad Inferiores omnes Eccleſiarum Præfectos defluxiſſe:* The Iniquity of the People came from the *Prieſts*; And that now, for the ſpace of many Years, there have been great and grievous Enormities committed at *Rome*: And that all this Plague and Miſchief, hath flowed unto all the Inferior Prelates of the Church, from the *High Throne of the Pope's Holineſs.*

Bernard. *Epiſt.* 125. *pag.* 1316. No wonder then, that their own *Abbot* St. *Bernard* ſaith—*Beſtia illa de Apocalypſi, cui datum eſt os loquens Blaſphemias, & bellum gerere cùm Sanctis, Petri Cathedram occupat, tanquàm Leo paratus ad Prædam.* In *Engliſh* thus--

That Beaſt that is ſpoken of in the *Revelations*, to whom is given a Mouth ſpeaking Blaſphemies, and to make War againſt the Saints, is now got up into *Peter's Chair*, like a Lion ready for his Prey.

Albertus *in* Johan. *cap.* 10. E. And *Albertus magnus* ſaith, *Illi qui modo Præſunt in Eccleſiis, plurimum ſunt Fures & Latrones; plus Exactores quam Paſtores, plus Spoliatores quam Tutores, plus Mactatores quam Cuſtodes, plus Perverſores quam Doctores, plus Seductores quam Ductores; Iſti ſunt Nuncii Antichriſti, Subverſores Ovium Chriſti:* (that is) The Prelates of the Church are moſt of them Theeves and Robbers; Wolves rather than Shepherds, rather Spoilers than Defenders, rather Killers than Keepers, rather Deceivers than Doctors, rather Perverters than Converters: Theſe be the Ambaſſadors and Nuntio's of Antichriſt, the Devourers of the Sheep of Chriſt.

And

And in the Council of *Rhemes*, the ſame *Bernard* (before praiſed) told the Biſhops to their Faces in open Council, and in open Court, (though he himſelf was no Biſhop) *Dicimini Paſtores, cùm ſitis raptores, (Fratres) Jeſus hodiè elegit ſibi multos Diabolos Epiſcopos, non ſunt Paſtores ſed Traditores:* (In *Engliſh* thus) My Brethren, ye are called Biſhops, but ye are meer Men-catchers and Robbers; Jeſus now adays has choſen to himſelf many Devils to be Biſhops: They are not Paſtors, but treacherous *Judas-ſes.* Bernard. *in Concilio* Remenſi. *See more in Serm.* 66. Bernardi *in* Cantic.

And *Johannes Sarisburienſis* gave this Reaſon, to Pope *Adrian* 4. why Popes are *uſually ſo ſhort-liv'd—Nè totam corrumpant Eccleſiam*, leſt they ſhould *(quoth he)* infect the whole Church. Johan Sarisburiens *in* Polycratico. *l. 6. c.* 24.

And one (of their own *Cardinals*) writes—That Pope *Hildebrand* poyſoned ſix Popes ſucceſſively one after another, to make room for himſelf to leap into the Papal Chair, which he purchaſed by thoſe *Divine Arts*; Here was a *Pope-catcher* as well as a *Man-catcher.* Beno Cardinalis.

And Pope *Urban* 6. was a *Cardinal-catcher*; for he catch'd five of his Cardinals at one time in a Sack, and threw them alive into the Sea, and drown'd them. Sabellicus Ænead. 9. *lib.* 9.

And Pope *John* 12. catch'd one of his Cardinals by the Noſe and cut it off; and another by the right Hand and cut that off too. Sabellicus Ænead. 9. *lib.* 2.

And Pope *Stephanus* catch'd the dead Body of Pope *Formoſus* his Predeceſſor, and cut off his Head and fore-fingers, and then threw the naked Carcaſe (of this *quondum Infallibility*) into the River *Tyber.* Platina *in vit.* Stephan. 6.

And more than once, ſome of them have *catch'd* and *ſnatch'd* Men to the Grave, by giving them a poyſoned Wafer in the Sacrament, and poyſoning the Wine in the Chalice or Cup.

So true is it what their own Writer ſaith, in Alluſion to the Cruelty of Popes, reciting Heb. 9. 7. *Into the Holy of Holies* Cantorum. ſis.

Holies (the Papal Chair) *did the High Priest enter alone, but not without Blood.*

Whilst we say of the *Protestant Religion* (which God has *miraculously preserved* so long, and *(I prophesy)* will still preserve *in despight of all the Popish and Hellish Stratagems, False Evidence and Sham-Plots* (as was said of *Israel*) The more *they were afflicted the more they grew.*

Therefore *chear up, true English Hearts!* Let not your Christian *Courage flag*; If by Popish Plots or Sham-Plots, *we cannot live* Protestants, *we can die* Protestants.

Thus *Gregory Nazianzen* comforted the Christians in his time, telling them of the excellency of their Religion in these Words, θανάτῳ ζῇ, κ᾽ τομῇ φύεται, κ᾽ ἄυξεται δαπανώμενον, It *lives by Death*, the more 'tis *cut*, the faster it *springs*, and *grows* by *diminishing.*

Cypr. l. 1. Epist. 3. So *Cyprian* —*Sacerdos Dei Evangelium tenens & Christi præcepta custodiens, occidi potest, vinci non potest:* A Minister of God following the Precepts Evangelical, may be killed, but not conquered.

As *Chrysostom* answered the threatning Empress *Eudoxia, nil nisi peccatum metuo*—tell her, *I fear nothing but Sin*; she might fright a *Parasitical Knave* or Fool, but not a *Chrysostom*; she may *kill* me, but she cannot *hurt* me.

Prov. 21. 30. For there *is no Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel, against the Lord*, if we believe the Holy Spirit of God. I'le conclude this with Holy *David*'s Prayer, Psal. 119. 121.

Psal. 119. 121. *I deal with the thing that is lawful and right, O give me not over unto mine Oppressors.*

FINIS.